AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraphs [0003]-[0006] with the following paragraph:

In one such safety system, a side air bag is utilized in conjunction with a seating system to protect an occupant in the event that the vehicle is struck at a side of the vehicle. To ensure proper timing of an air bag system, an air bag sensor is typically utilized to detect an acceleration profile experienced by a vehicle and to send a signal to the air bag. If the acceleration profile is above a predetermined limit, the sensor will cause the air bag to deploy as soon as possible to ensure that the air bag is in position in a timely manner to ensure proper occupant restraint. If the acceleration profile is below a predetermined limit, the sensor will not send a signal to the air bag and the air bag will not deploy. In this manner, air bags are commonly designed to deploy only when the sensor detects a predetermined acceleration profile and to prevent deployment when the vehicle experiences a low speed impact. To prevent deployment of an air bag during a low speed impact, conventional air bag sensors are commonly disposed within a structure such as sheet metal that usually deforms before the air bag sensor receives the signal. Such systems may have a slight delay in the deployment of the air bag under a high speed or high load impact due to the air bag sensor being disposed within a structure of the vehicle.

Please replace Paragraph [0018] with the following paragraph:

[0018] The main body 12 further includes a ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34 extending between an outer end 36 and an inner end 38, as best shown in FIG.

1. The outer end 36 includes an outer engagement surface 40 and the inner end includes an engagement surface 42, whereby the outer engagement surface 40 is operable to receive an external force and transmit the force along the ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34 to the inner engagement surface 42, as will be discussed further below.

Please replace Paragraph [0023] with the following paragraph:

[0023] In the event that the vehicle 78 is struck from the side such that a force is imparted on the outer panel 84 of the door assembly 76, the load transfer element 10 is operable to transfer the load from the outer panel 84 to the inner panel 82 and structural pillar 80. Specifically, when the outer panel 84 experiences a predetermined load, the outer panel 84 will deflect, thereby contacting the outer engagement surface 40 of the main body 12. Once the outer panel 84 deflects sufficiently, the force is transmitted to the inner engagement surface 42 and inner panel 82 along the ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34. For example, in a pole impact situation or simulated test, the load transfer element 10 is operable to receive a concentrated load from a pole 90 and transfer the load to the structural element 10 via the outer panel, 84, main body 12, and inner panel 82 along the ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34. As can be appreciated, the main body 12 ensures that the load will be transferred along the ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34 very quickly as the outer panel 84 only has to deflect a small amount prior to contacting the outer engagement surface 40. In this manner, the load applied to the outer panel 84 is also transferred to the inner panel 82 and structural pillar 80 almost immediately after the initial impact, as will be discussed further below.

Please replace Paragraph [0026] with the following paragraph:

[0026] As previously discussed, an air bag system is designed to operate only when a predetermined load is exerted on the air bag sensor 88. In this regard, the air bag sensor 88 should only fire the air bag when the impact load creates a sufficient acceleration signal. To accommodate this condition, the load transfer element 10 allows a low force of a predetermined magnitude to contact the outer panel 84 without sending a sufficient acceleration signal to the air bag sensor to deploy the air bag. Specifically, the load transfer element 10 allows the outer panel 84 to deflect into the clearance space 72 generally below the main body 12 such that the low impact force will not transfer through the main body 12 along the ~~longitudinal axis 34~~transverse axis 34. In this manner, the load transfer element 10 prevents the low impact force from reaching the inner panel 82 and structural pillar 80, thereby preventing a sufficient acceleration signal from being sent to the air bag sensor 88.